

*Proceedings of April Meeting
Local Authority Support for Cost Effective Waste
Management*

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Julie Coxon has been with Sandwell MBC for 19 years and has been specialising in Environmental Work for the past 10 years. Her work involves all sectors of industry, giving advice on Legal matters, Waste Disposal and Energy Advice.

Julie was well aware that there were many business pressures on firms but, she said, Resource Efficiency can reduce costs, improve efficiency and help with legal compliance, at the same as increasing competitiveness, improving public image and calming relationships with neighbours. Many suggestions can save money, which doesn't mean they are harmful to the environment!

Having set the scene, Julie gave us a short exercise on resources issues in an Engineering Company with factory processes and offices. The audience were able to identify hazards from solvents, a diesel tank, unsafe skips and inappropriate choice of solvents for a process. Julie went on to talk about the **Duty of Care** aimed at safe and secure handling, storage and disposal of waste. Use of licensed waste carriers is probably the single, most powerful tool in stopping fly-tipping. If only more waste producers checked on this and where carriers took waste systematically, the problem would be severely curtailed!

The **Hazardous Waste Regulations** require the segregation of hazardous from non-hazardous waste and registration as a 'Producer'. For producers of waste on a less frequent basis, say, after a site clear out some items like light tubes and IT equipment, may be hazardous then ask Julie for advice. The Packaging Waste Regulations only apply to >50 tonnes and >£2 million turnover p.a., in which case the producer has to demonstrate specific recovery and recycling targets have been met.

With the **Landfill Regulations**, co-disposal of haz and non-haz waste is prohibited and there are restrictions on some wastes. Haz waste must be pre-treated and non-haz will require the same from October 2007. The **Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations (WEEE)**

Regulations 2006 make producers responsible for reuse, recovery and recycling of their EEE. Retailers and suppliers have to take it back. The **Water Resources Act** controls the discharges to surface water drains and may need an environment Agency (EA) permit. The Act also requires minimal waste of water and maintenance of fittings. The **Water Industry Act** controls the discharges to foul sewers and may need consent from the sewerage company.

In summarising the Waste issues, Julie said the true cost of waste could be as much as 4% of Turnover! The best actions were to segregate it, reduce it and recycle it wherever possible! The reasons were that less waste = less landfill costs (£32/tonne next April); less waste=less material costs; organising waste helps Duty of Care compliance. Reusing as much as possible for packaging pallets or waste paper means less disposed of and may reduce obligations under the Packaging Waste Regulations. Also, only use one skip at a time, compact waste, reduce bins on site and make sure they are clearly marked to reduce cross-contamination. It also saves money, further down the waste chain, to look for less hazardous materials in the first place. Other savings may come from talking to suppliers and customers about returnable packaging.

Moving on to Energy Issues, Julie talked about increasing energy bills and the Climate Change Levy with its potential for widening the carbon-trading scheme. It is also a good idea to read your own meters weekly and even get a 'smart' meter fitted. Following on from that, check the bills and identify and rectify faults quickly to minimise waste. There is also a potential to minimise use by switching off appliances overnight – a PC Monitor will use enough to print 800 A4 copies. The same can be said about lights, which can be switched off or exchange for a low-energy version! Power can be saved by using variable speed motors that are more efficient and should not be over-sized for their function. Regular maintenance will also save energy costs and result in less downtime. Closing large delivery doors have the potential to save £1,000s and fitting of timers will ensure that heat is not generated unless it is needed. Another wasteful use of energy is air compressors, which costs 10 times more than other power uses as the machines are only 10% efficient a 90% of energy used goes into heat. As a final measure – consider renewable energy, such as wind, solar, waste wood etc. Cold reduce disposal costs, is exempt from CCL and has a positive public image.

Regarding Water Charges, it is a good idea to read meters regularly, particularly after a site is closed and before it is opened next time. This will help to identify leaks overnight, as well as checking on bills, because a drip every second wastes a gallon of water a day! Reuse of water or

rainwater is also a good idea for vehicle washing, cooling or rinsing purposes because clean water is not essential for many process like these.

Some useful contacts: -

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Groundwork Black Country 0121 530 5510

Envirowise www.envirowise.gov.uk 0800 585794

Carbon Trust www.carbontrust.co.uk 0800 085 2005

www.eca.gov.uk

Environment Agency www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Netregs (Legislative Information) www.netregs.gov.uk

Local Authority Officers – Environmental Health. Trading Standards,
Planning